EDUCATE TO INNOVATE
PROGRAM OF SESSIONS

SESSION 1 (9:10 – 10:10 A.M.)

Art, Nature, & Mindfulness (PreK-12)
Phoenix Zoo | Leslie Bell, Formal Learning & Engagement Manager | Ben Brose, Programs Facilitator III
Art and nature go together beautifully! Join Phoenix Zoo Outreach experts as we practice mindfulness and letting go of perfectionism through art and appreciation for nature.

Carriages, Crystals & Creativity: A Cinderella STEAM Workshop (K-5)
Arizona Science Center | Noortje Nelissen, Professional Development Facilitator
Step into the world of Cinderella with this magical STEAM workshop! Participants will engineer a fairy-tale carriage, design a glass slipper using recycled materials, explore crystallization, create a royal feast recipe, and more—all while blending science, art, and storytelling. This workshop offers a sneak peek into a larger Storybook STEAM unit—perfect for classroom STEAM lessons or afterschool STEM clubs. Teachers will receive complete lesson plans to bring these engaging activities back to their students.

Growing Scientist - Whole Child Learning (PreK-2)
Thinking Mats | Christina Torres, Founder & CEO | Emma Marin, Trainer
STEM learning isn't just about building—it's about thinking, feeling, and reflecting. In this engaging workshop, you'll learn how to use the Thinking Mats 3-steps as a powerful tool to help PreK–2 students process their science and engineering experiences. Discover how consistent use builds a deeper understanding, language skills, and metacognition. You'll leave with a new and simple way to approach STEM through the lens of whole-child learning. Come learn how to turn every science challenge into a meaningful moment of growth!

Mindfulness Unveiled: Explore the Brain-Body Connection for a Happier, Healthier You (PreK-12)
Mindfulness First | Madicyn Quiroz, Senior Programming Specialist + Instructor
Join us for an enlightening and transformative workshop that delves deep into the fascinating connection between our brains and bodies while discovering the true meaning and immense benefits of mindfulness, supporting educators on how to skillfully address on-the-spot physical and emotional regulation. We'll dispel common misconceptions about mindfulness and provide educators with practical, research-backed strategies and easy-to-implement tools to enhance both personal and professional well-being while creating more successful classroom dynamics.

Reimagining the Field Trip Experience with Act One VR (5-12)
Act One | Emanuel Class, Field Trip Manager
Experience our engaging, groundbreaking virtual reality field trips! Act One Arts Immersion™ is designed for students in grades five through twelve and is free for Title I schools. Since its inception in 2021, Arts Immersion™ has served over 18,000 students. The program's mission is to close the arts equity gap in Arizona's Title I schools by overcoming economic, geographic, and logistical barriers to provide inspiring, engaging, and educational VR experiences that cultivate knowledge and appreciation of the arts and inspire creativity in your students.

SESSION 1 (9:10 – 10:10 A.M.)

Secrets of the Sea (Film)

Arizona Science Center | Irene P. Flinn Giant Screen Theater

Prepare to meet some of the ocean's strangest and most spectacular creatures in the new film Secrets of the Sea, narrated by Joelle Carter, for IMAX® and giant screen theaters! From adorable pygmy seahorses and opalescent squid, to manta rays, tiger sharks, a coconut octopus, and much more, Secrets of the Sea takes you face-to-face with an astonishing array of marine critters, showing the fascinating ways they interact with each other and their environment. Filmed in the Philippines, Mexico, Tahiti, Indonesia, Palau, Hawaii, California and other locations, and featuring more than 70 different marine species, Secrets of the Sea reveals the many wonders and mysteries of our ocean world and demonstrates the critical importance of marine biodiversity to keeping our oceans healthy.

Where Social Studies Meets STEM: A New Path to Inquiry (1-12)

Arizona Department of Education | Jill Scott, K12 Social Studies and World and Native Languages Specialist

This interactive session explores how social studies and STEM can work together to deepen student understanding through real-world problem solving. Participants will engage in hands-on activities and leave with practical strategies for interdisciplinary teaching. Ideal for educators looking to foster critical thinking and collaboration across content areas.

SESSION 2 (10:20 – 11:20 A.M.)

Engineering Design Process in Primary Grades (PreK-4)

Dysart Unified School District - iExplore Team | Kathryn Voss, District iExplore Lead

Teachers will learn how to incorporate the engineering design process into their classrooms through read alouds and hands-on activities. Educators will also discuss strategies for encouraging creativity, questioning, and persistence in their students. By the end of the session, teachers will leave with practical ideas and resources to implement in their own classrooms.

Exploring Pathways to Bioscience & Healthcare Careers (6-12)

Maricopa County School Superintendent's Office | Bradley Bostick, Teacher-Industry Support Coordinator

Discover how easy and exciting it can be to bring bioscience and healthcare career exploration into your classroom with the Exploring Pathways to Bioscience and Healthcare Careers (EPBC) Program. In this hands-on session, educators will gain access to ready-to-use industry spotlights and classroom resources that spark student interest in high-demand careers. Participants will also receive an interactive tutorial on the Educator Pro Connect Tool, which makes it easy to schedule live interactions with industry professionals. You'll leave with practical strategies to connect students with real-world experts and deepen their career awareness. Don't miss this opportunity to help your students explore the future of bioscience and healthcare.

From Rivers to Rings: Exploring Water Across Earth and the Solar System Through Inclusive STEM Learning (PreK-12)

Northern Arizona University: Center for STEM Teaching & Learning | Dr. Lauren Shollenberger, Senior Professional Learning Coordinator | Stephanie Jackson, Senior Professional Learning Coordinator

Educators will engage in activities from PLANETS, NASA funded out of school time science and engineering curriculum. Through the activities, educators will discuss why water is important and explore where water is in our Solar System. Educators will analyze the activity for incorporated strategies to promote inclusion, belonging, and relevance, followed by creating a plan on how to include them in their school setting. Educators will be provided with a full lesson plan for the activities and access to all the FREE curriculum resources online.

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SESSION 2 (10:20 – 11:20 A.M.)

Indigenous Science Education for Elementary Science Educators (3-5)

ADE Office of Indian Education | Elaine Mollindo, Professional Learning Specialist | Sarah Sleasman, Director of Science and STEM

Join us for an enlightening one-hour session on Indigenous science education tailored for elementary science educators around place-based learning. Explore how Indigenous knowledge practices relate to science learning and teaching. Discover how placed-based learning can be used in science and STEM classrooms to support ALL students, teachers and communities.

Introduction to Edison Robots (K-8)

Arizona Science Center | Brenna Chambers Follett, Director of Professional Learning

The Edison Robot Professional Development workshop provides educators with a hands-on introduction to integrating Edison robots into their classroom activities. Participants will learn how to use these versatile robots to teach STEM concepts, coding, and problem-solving skills in a fun and engaging way.

Slime Time (PreK-1)

Arizona Science Center - Science on Wheels | Vanessa Ramirez Gutierrez, Science on Wheels Manager

We bring the science to your classroom! Science on Wheels workshops consist of hands-on, grade-specific content based on Arizona State Education Standards. Get messy with us as you investigate preschool chemistry! Learn about the properties of silly, slippery slimes and invent a scientific goo to take home.

STEM-ulating Activities for Environmental Problem Solving (6-8)

Grand Canyon University | Marni Landry, Director of K12 STEM Outreach

Discover inquiry-based activities to help students explore issues around human and environmental interactions, enhancing STEM skills, and broadening global awareness. Topics include natural resource use, population trends, climate change and sustainable communities. Engage in hands-on simulations and collaborative problem solving around real-world challenges. Receive multidisciplinary lessons and digital tools aligned with Arizona Science Standards.

SESSION 3 (12:30 – 1:30 P.M.)

Bits, Bots, & Building AI Literacy: AI for Tiny Techies (PreK-3)

AzTEA | Dr. Nan Williams, Executive Director | Lindsey McCaleb, AzTEA Past President

This session invites you to explore the exciting world of artificial intelligence with your youngest learners! Demystify AI by understanding its basic "bits" and "bots," and learn how to build foundational AI literacy in your K-2 classroom. This session will define AI in a way that resonates with little minds, exploring how machines can "learn" and "think." We'll delve into the opportunities AI presents, from creative tools to problem-solving partners, while also discussing crucial guardrails and digital citizenship. Discover how media literacy plays a vital role in navigating AI-driven content, helping children distinguish between real and generated information.

Inspecting with Maricopa County (3-8)

Maricopa County Air Quality Department | Jenny Frank, Education Outreach Coordinator | Conni Griffith, Vector Control Educational Outreach Specialist

Join Maricopa County Air Quality, Storm Water, and Vector Control to learn about our newest STEM classroom resource, Inspecting with Maricopa County. Explore air and storm water pollution, and mosquito control through engaging hands-on experiences. Empower students to make positive changes in their communities while meeting education standards. Learn how you can bring this exciting event to your classroom, free to schools within Maricopa County.

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ARIZONA SCIENCE CENTER

SESSION 3 (12:30 – 1:30 P.M.)

Learning Through Play Brick by Brick (PreK-12)

Arizona Science Center | Ashley Brooks, Director of CAMP INNOVATION | Maddy Rohm, Senior Scientist of Science Communications

Explore how to design meaningful, play-based learning experiences inspired by LEGO's Build the Change initiative, while deepening your understanding of the characteristics of play and their impact on student engagement and development.

Micro:bits, Next Level! (5-10)

SEMI Foundation | Bia Hamed, Program Manager for Global Initiatives

Get ready to spark creativity in your classroom! In this session, teachers will use a Micro:bit and everyday household items to build two exciting, hands-on projects their students will love. Follow simple step-by-step directions to create a digital "safe" box to protect treasures and a one-of-a-kind musical instrument to make some noise—in the best way possible!

STEM Myths: Busted (PreK-12)

Arizona Department of Education | Johanna Kaiser, K-12 Science Education Specialist | Sarah Sleasman, Director of Science and STEM

STEM Myths: Busted is an engaging, interactive session designed to challenge common misconceptions about STEM education. Participants will explore widely held myths through collaborative group work, using real-world scenarios to spark discussion and reflection. By the end of the session, educators will leave with a deeper understanding of how to foster more inclusive, accurate, and inspiring STEM learning environments.

The Science of Money: Exploring Patterns and Change through Compound Interest (6-8)

Take Charge Today | Robin Palmer, Education Specialist

What can compound interest teach us about systems, change, and cause and effect? In this hands-on session, educators will explore how the financial concept of compound interest can be used to model scientific thinking. Participants will connect Arizona Science Standards — including the crosscutting concepts of Patterns, Cause and Effect, and Stability and Change — to real-world math applications. Through simulations, graphing, and problem-solving activities, attendees will leave with classroom-ready strategies to bring financial literacy into their STEM instruction while reinforcing core scientific principles.

Turn Students Into Human Computers and Forever Change Their Math Identity (PreK-12)

braided STEM | DaNel Hogan, Founder

Words matter and nowhere is it more important than in building the math identity of students of all ages. Learn how to turn students of any age into human computers in a couple of different ways and watch their math confidence grow immediately. They will be showing off their new skills and practicing math without even realizing it.

SESSION 4 (1:40 – 2:40 P.M.)

Code a Geometric Star Quilt (3-8)

Code.org | Linda Angeloff, Facilitator

Are you looking for meaningful ways to integrate computer science with your curriculum? In this workshop we will integrate math with art and design and programming. There is also some history here too!

CSI Arizona: Where Science Meets the Law (7-12)

Arizona Bar Foundation | Andrea Viel, Instruction Specialist | Leah Prager, Program Specialist

Discover how the CSI Arizona program brings forensic science to life for middle and high school students. Through hands-on crime scene investigations and real-world legal applications, students explore the connection between science and the law. This session will provide an overview of the program, available educator training opportunities, and how students can participate in the statewide CSI Arizona competition.

Designing the Future: Using EDPs to Build Workforce Readiness (3-8)

Arizona Science Center | Maree Toscano, Professional Development Facilitator

This session is focused on using the Engineering Design Process (EDP) to equip students with essential skills for the future. Participants will explore the 4 C's—critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication—and how these core competencies enhance workforce readiness and lifelong success. The session will demonstrate how the Engineering Design Process supports the development of key soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability. Educators will actively engage in hands-on EDP activities to experience firsthand how these strategies foster career readiness.

Ignite Imagination & Learning with Drama-Based Science Instruction! (K-6)

Childsplay Theatre | Katie Brantley, Director of Education and School Programs | Jen Gantwerker, Education Program Manager

Boost the fun and watch learning skyrocket! Discover how drama-based instruction, an evidence-supported approach, increases learners' engagement and comprehension. Experience three drama strategies, each one through the lens of a different science concept, and explore how to incorporate them into YOUR classroom. This dynamic, participatory workshop will span K-6 content and connect to both core ideas and standards.

Integrating Authentic Research in the Classroom (4-12)

Arizona Science Center | Beth Nickel, Chief Academic Officer

Unlock your students' potential with authentic inquiry! In this session, you'll see how giving learners the freedom to explore topics that matter to them can fuel academic growth while developing critical 21st-century skills like creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. Walk away with inspiring strategies to make research a dynamic, hands-on part of your classroom culture.

It's All About the Prompt (PreK-12)

Rae Mask, Balsz ESD, IT Supervisor | Dr. Nan Williams, AzTEA, Executive Director

This interactive workshop will introduce K-12 educators to the world of prompt engineering, a skill that empowers educators to harness the potential of AI tools for innovative and efficient teaching practices. Participants will learn how to craft effective prompts to generate a wide range of AI-powered content, from lesson plans and quizzes to personalized learning experiences.

Storytime Meets STEM: Robots Everywhere! (K-2)

Arizona Science Teachers Association | Tisha Bourne, ASTA Ambassador | Annette Koweek, ASTA Ambassador

Get Ready to Power Up Your STEM Lessons! "Robots Everywhere" from Picture Perfect STEM K–2 is more than just a lesson—it's an immersive experience that blends science, literacy, and hands-on inquiry in a way that captivates young learners and energizes educators. Throughout the session, you'll dive into meaningful discourse, uncover strategies to support diverse learners, and see firsthand how curiosity and conversation can drive scientific understanding. Best of all? You'll leave with a ready-to-use digital toolbox packed with resources to bring this lesson to life in your own classroom—no assembly required!